

Abstracts of the Summer Lecture Series 2004 at Hopewell Culture National Historical Park

Residents of central and southern Ohio and visitors to Hopewell Culture National Historical Park in Chillicothe made a habit of attending the annual Thursday evening summer lecture series. This annual series has been very well received in past years, and the 2004 series was also very popular. The speakers for 2004 generated considerable interest about Ohio archeology, with most of the speakers focusing on Ohio Hopewell. Abstracts of these wonderful lectures are presented below. Plans for next year's lecture series are already underway, and readers are encouraged to contact Hopewell Culture National Historical Park for details in 2005. Hopewell Culture National Historical Park was pleased to host the summer archeological lecture series. The following is a list of speakers, titles, and abstracts of the topics presented.

June 10, 2004. Dr. Frank Cowan: "Visualizing Ohio Hopewell Sites: Earthworks or Woodworks?"

Ohio Hopewell sites are well known for their monumental earthworks, and our current understanding of those places is strongly influenced by the earthen architecture witnessed and recorded by 19th century surveyors and antiquarians. However, the architectural medium that dominated those places during their actual periods of active use was wood. Recent excavations at Fort Ancient and Stubbs Earthworks in the Little Miami River valley reveal numerous wooden structures, including special-purpose shelters, temporary dwellings, ritual buildings and enclosures, and monumentally scaled ceremonial architecture. There are also clear hints for an extraordinary variety of Hopewell wooden architecture elsewhere in the Ohio River valley region. Such evidence forces us to rethink the character and use of Hopewell ritual spaces and to recognize that these were not static monuments but active, dynamically changing places.

June 17, 2004. Dr. Mark Seeman, Kent State University: "Ohio Hopewell and the Wild West: The Social and Symbolic Importance of Grizzly Bear Teeth in Hopewell Societies"

Ohio Hopewell (1–400 AD) is an archeological complex that required the acquisition, display, and burial of many standardized artifactual forms. In this lecture, I discuss the characteristics that lend Ohio Hopewell its distinctiveness, and examine the importance of using precious and costly materials for public display. As an example, I present the results of my recent research on the use of ornaments made of grizzly bear teeth, and discuss how they fit into the larger pattern of western voyaging for spiritual power.

June 24, 2004. Dr. Robert Riordan, Wright State University: "The Pollock Hilltop Enclosure: Research and Interpretations"

The Pollock Works, a small Hopewell hilltop enclosure in Greene County, has been under archeological investigation by Wright State since the 1980s. This presentation will discuss some of the major findings that have been made there, including some recent discoveries in the central gateway. Pollock is the only Hopewell enclosure for which a construction sequence has been determined, and is so far the only hilltop enclosure known to have been stockaded. The significance of the use of stone to face its embankments is discussed in the context of how the site may have been viewed in its landscape setting.

July 1, 2004. Dr. Richard Yerkes, Ohio State University: "Hopewell Settlements"

For many years archeologists thought that Hopewell maize farmers lived in sedentary villages. It was believed that earthwork construction and elaborate Hopewell rituals required a food surplus and a sedentary agricultural economy. A later model has the Hopewell living in dispersed farmsteads where they grew native weedy crops using a system of shifting slash-and-burn cultivation. However, Robert Hall, James B. Griffin, and others have described Ohio Hopewell societies as egalitarian, mobile, and decentralized. The few small domestic Ohio Hopewell sites that have been excavated have not produced any evidence for prolonged occupation. A mobile Hopewell settlement-subsistence system seems more likely. Regular trips to mounds and earthworks for ritual and social interaction were probably followed by dispersal to small settlements to hunt, fish, gather wild nuts, seeds and fruits, and harvest domesticated weedy plants. Elaborate ceremonies at the earthworks might have been necessary to integrate the small mobile populations that used wild foods to meet most of their subsistence needs. The Hopewell show us

the degree of cultural complexity that can be achieved with the organizational flexibility of tribal societies, without agriculture, food surpluses, and permanent settlements.

July 8, 2004. Dr. Kathryn Jakes, Ohio State University: "Fabrics from Hopewell Mounds: Evidence of Technology and Cultural Practice"

Native American sites are classified as "Hopewell" by the particular characteristics of their ceremonial mounds and by the artifacts contained therein. The incised mica and copper, the marked and painted ceramics, and the flint bladelets are well known to the public who visit museums such as the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park. The similarity in style of these artifacts, the trade of raw materials for artifact manufacture, and the manner in which the mounds were constructed provide evidence of communication between people from Minnesota to Florida and from Kansas to New York.

The textiles recovered from these sites are less well known to the public. They have also received less research attention than the more permanent artifacts of copper and stone and ceramic but recent investigations lend some new insights into Hopewell technological knowledge and cultural practices. Study of fabrics provides evidence for their manufacture and their use. We can learn how fibers were processed from plants, spun into yarn, and twined in to fabric. Different fabric structures have different properties, and therefore are made with different uses in mind. Fibers removed from specific plants are long, strong, and able to be spun into the yarns observed in these fabrics. Dyed and painted fabrics were noted by early travelers to the North American continent, and were also noted by archeologists, but very little material retains visible coloration today. Recent studies in replication of dyeing processes will ultimately lead to the ability to identify dyes and pigments employed on the Hopewell fabrics.

From the study of textiles, we can also infer cultural practices. For example, the charred fabrics remains, though fragmentary and very fragile, show the types of structures used in cremation ceremonies as distinguished from fabrics used in other ways. Recent investigations of fabrics and yarns from Hopewell Mound sites revealed significant differences between sites and between charred and uncharred material, leading to the conclusion that although cremation rituals and burials may have been culturally dictated over a wide geographic area, the textiles used in these rituals were locally produced by individual craftspeople or groups.

July 15, 2004. Lynn Simonelli and Bill Kennedy, Dayton Society of Natural History: "Exploring the Past in Dayton, Ohio, AD 1200"

Past and current excavations in Dayton have allowed archeologists to uncover a window into the prehistory of southwestern Ohio, ca. 800 years ago. Investigations at two Fort Ancient culture villages have revealed surprising variety in the types of activities practiced at these two sites that are separated only slightly in time and space. This program will highlight two important sites that are allowing archeologists to reconstruct a portion of Ohio's rich prehistoric heritage. The program will help visitors to understand what it was like to be a farmer in the year AD 1200 and will demonstrate how archeologists use both high and low tech tools to learn about the Fort Ancient culture.

July 22, 2004. Dr. Bob Genheimer, Cincinnati Museum Center: "On the Edges of Earthworks: Important Hopewell Sites Near Stubbs and Fort Ancient"

Recent work at both Stubbs, a geometric earthwork, and Fort Ancient, a hilltop enclosure, illustrate the importance of sites near the periphery of these Hopewell-age earthworks. Extreme and exotic lithic densities have been recorded at a site near each of these earthworks, and structure footprints have been identified at several. The temporary nature of these structures, and the large quantities of exotic lithic debitage, suggest that the sites may have served as short-term knapping locations for the production of bifacial and blade artifacts. Exotic materials at the Barnyard Site, near Stubbs, include Flint Ridge, Wyandotte, Newman, Knox, Knife River Chalcedony, obsidian, and mica.

July 29, 2004. Brian Redmond, Cleveland Museum of Natural History: “Fishing and Farming along the North Coast, Studying the Later Prehistory of Northern Ohio”

For a thousand years prior to European contact (ca. AD 650–1650), Native American societies in northern Ohio fished and hunted the rich wetlands, river estuaries, and islands of Lake Erie’s southern shoreline. By AD 1000, these same groups made the shift from full-time hunting and gathering to farming. More than 30 years of archeological work in this area has turned up the well-preserved remains of the huge fishing campsites and fortified village sites where this transition took place. Recent excavations at the Danbury site on Sandusky Bay have provided intriguing new evidence of these once-thriving north coast cultures.